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CAUTION

TO SUCH AS OBSERVE

*DAYS* and *TIMES*:

*To which is added, An*

ADDRESS

TO

MAGISTRATES, PARENTS, MASTERS of  
FAMILIES, &c.

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By SOPHIA HUME. R

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*O! that the People were wise, that they would consider, that  
the Most High is a God of Knowledge, and by him Mens Ac-  
tions are weigh'd.*

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THE FOURTH EDITION.

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T O

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High is a GOD of Knowledge, and by him Mens Actions are weigh'd.*

U N D E R the legal Dispensation the sacred  
History informs us, that there were *divers  
Feasts* celebrated by the *Jews*, by divine Au-  
thority and Appointment; and were intend-  
ed to perpetuate the Memory of those great Events  
which the Almighty had wrought in Favour of that  
People; which gracious Regard, and singular Love  
and Mercy, they were commanded to acknowledge  
by the warmest Return of Gratitude, the highest De-  
gree of Love, and most perfect Obedience to the  
Laws and Precepts of the most High God; the  
Greatest and most Essential being delivered with un-  
common Solemnity, in these Words, *Hear, O Israel!  
The Lord thy God is one Lord; and Thou shalt love the  
Lord thy God with all thine Heart, and with all thy  
Soul, and with all thy Strength.* And as they conti-  
nued stedfast and simply devoted in Heart and Mind  
to the Love and Adoration of the one true God, he  
condescends to covenant to continue the Marks of his  
favourable Regard, even to Thousands of Generations:  
In Consequence of which he attends and protects this  
People thro' an uncommon Scene of Danger, Streights

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and Difficulties; in surmounting thereof he manifested his great Power, and magnified his Glory; which caused the People to believe in his Words, and to sing his Praise.

Being thus conducted thro' their Troubles into the promised Land of Peace and Plenty, and put into Possession of Houses which they built not; Vineyards and Oliveyards which they planted not; when they partook of the Good of the Land, and had eaten and drank to the full, flushed with their Prosperity and Plenty, they rose up to play, and began to grow wanton; and in that Situation, unmindful of the Author of all their Mercies and Benefits, who had fulfilled his gracious Promise, and done such Wonders for their Sakes, they forgot the Lord their Redeemer, and lightly esteemed the Holy One of *Israel*, sacrificing to their *Nets* and to their *Drags*, attributing their Successes to their own Strength, Power and Wisdom.

In this insensible State they grew negligent of the Statutes of the Lord, and cast his Laws behind their Backs; they would not listen to the Counsel or Reproof of God, but turn'd Judgment into Wormwood, and left off to do Righteousness: They oppressed the Poor, and respected the Person of the Rich in Judgment; the Cause of the Widow came not before them; neither did they judge the Fatherless; they set light by Father and Mother, and their Pride and Arrogance testified to their Faces: The Prophets reproved them for their Covetousness, Drunkenness, Adultery, and for Idolatry, the most unheard of and unparallel'd, far more impious than other Nations; for they chang'd the Glory of the incorruptible God into corruptible Things, such as Silver and Gold, and worshipp'd Idols in high Places, as well as in the more secret Chambers of Imagery; they went after their own Inventions, and served the Creature more than the Creator: They read the Command, that *they should love God above all Things*, but loved and served their own Lusts; they hated the Prophets, and those that rebuked in the Gate; and to conclude the



Catalogue of their Impieties, the Prophet tells us, *their Hands were full of Blood.*

Notwithstanding all these high Charges against them, pronounced by the Prophets in the Name of the Lord, they still, with the Temple of the Lord in their Mouths, offered outward Sacrifices, but the inward Sacrifice of a contrite Heart they were Strangers to; they presented their Bodies in the Temple, but their Hearts were occupied by their Idols; for each Man had set up his Idols in his own Heart according to the Lust thereof; whether his Affections went after Riches, Honour, Power, or Glory of this World; they were exact in legal Ceremonies, and punctual in observing their *appointed Feasts*; they assembled and sat as the People of God, and perform'd bodily Exercise, while their Hearts were polluted with Sin, and consequently far separated from God, who is essential Holiness and Purity.

But the Lord, who is a God of Knowledge weighed their Actions in the just Balance of the Sanctuary, and found them deficient in many Points of Duty, and guilty of the Commission of many Sins and Iniquities; therefore he queried with the People after this Manner, *Shall I be enquired of at all at your Hands?* As if he had said, Is it reasonable that I, who have searched out your Sins, and know your Insincerity, should answer your formal Mockeries: No, certainly, but I will, saith the Lord, answer them according to their Idols. *I bate, I despise (saith God) your Feast-Days, I will not smell your solemn Assemblies; your new Moons, and your appointed Feasts, my Soul hateth: Your solemn Meetings are Iniquity. I will not accept your Offerings; take away from me the Noise of your Songs: I will not hear the Melody of your Viols; when you make many Prayers I will not hear. But wash you, make you clean, put away the Evil of your Doings from before mine Eyes; cease to do Evil, learn to do well! let judgment run down as Water, and Righteousness as a mighty stream, and then I will reason with you, and pass by your Offences.*

And notwithstanding the Condescension and Readiness

ness of the Almighty to pardon their Sins, they continued in their Impieties, which witnessed to their Faces; so that they could not evade pleading *Guilty*; yet to such an high Pitch of Obduracy and Impenitency of Heart were they reduced by Sin, that they still rejected the gracious Admonitions and kind Warnings to turn to their first Love and Obedience, but went on to drink in Iniquity as an Ox drinketh Water, and declared their Sins as openly and daringly as *Sodom*; having created a false Peace, and flattered themselves, that the Visions of the Prophets were for a long Time, and far remote from the Accomplishment: And because the Judgments of God were delayed, their Hearts were fully bent to do Evil. But behold, the rejected Mercy of God gives Way to his Justice, who, tho' he bears long, will not always strive with Man; yet, as loth to let his Hand take hold on Vengeance, seems to ask, *If it were not just that he should visit for these Things: Yet how shall I give thee up* (to Destruction) *O Ephraim!* And still intreats, *that they would lay hold on Mercy, lest he satisfied his Justice in their Overtthrow.* But their Eyes they had closed so, that they would not see the Things that belonged to their Peace and Happiness.

And now the Almighty deals with them in a more awakening Manner, bringing Sword, Pestilence and Famine, into their Cities, and causing many to be carried into Captivity, and at length totally subjecting them to the *Roman* Yoke and Government: And at this Juncture was fulfilled the Prediction, *That the Scepter was to depart from Israel outwardly, and transferr'd to the more inward, spiritual, glorious and peaceable Coming of Skilo's Government, usher'd in with the Saviour of Mankind; not to restore the outward Kingdoms of Israel, but to establish his own Power and Dominion in the Heart, and to let them know, that the Kingdom of God is within Man.*

Thus Christ comes with Offers of Grace, and Conditions of Peace and Reconciliation in his Hand, first proposed to the People whom God had selected from  
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the Nations of the Earth, to place his Name among, which as they received, and believed in him, was to be the Glory of that People, as well as a Light to enlighten the *Gentiles*, of whose Stock you are, who are now about to rejoice, as you profess in that Life and Immortality brought to Light by Christ Jesus; who neither himself, nor his Apostles, appointed by Precept nor Practice any *Feasts* or *Fasts* in the Church of God; but on the contrary, an eminent Apostle, viz. *Paul*, under an Apprehension that some of his new *Christian* Converts were falling into *Judaism*, as judging the Observation of the *Jewish* Days necessary, he expresses his Concern in these Terms; *Now that ye know God, or rather are known of him, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly Elements, whereunto ye desire to be in Bondage! Ye observe Days and Months, and Times and Years; I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you Labour in vain.*

But to pass over any farther Remarks on this Practice among *Christians*, I would humbly recommend to you (who observe *Days*, and particularly that wherein you profess to commemorate the Birth of Jesus Christ our Lord) to consider the Significancy of the Name *JESUS*, and the End of his Appearance in Humanity: *He shall be call'd JESUS, a Saviour, because he shall save his People from their Sins*, not in their Sins; agreeable to the Testimony of the Harbinger of Christ to the People who repaired to his Baptism; *Behold!* says he, *the Lamb of God, who takes away the Sins of the World:* As much as if he had said, Don't depend on me (I am not the Christ) nor my Administration, which cannot remove your Impurities from the Soul, for I only baptize with Water; but he, referring to Christ, shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with Fire; his Fan in his Hand, to separate and burn up the Chaff, but to gather and preserve the Wheat; to remove the Dross from the pure Gold, and to distinguish between the formal Worshipper in the outward Courts, from him who worships God in Spirit and in Truth: For Christ came to put an End



to carnal Ceremonies, and to introduce a more spiritual Intercourse with God, in and by his Spirit, and in Truth and Sincerity, not in Appearance and Form only: And his first Operation in the Soul, to prepare it for such a Service, was to lay the Ax of his Power to the Root of the corrupt Tree, and then consequently every Branch of Sin must fall to the Ground. And the first Admonition which proceeded from the Lip of Truth was, in these Words, *Repent and amend your Ways.*

And now you, who assume the *Christian* Name, who boast of Gospel Light and Privileges, suffer the Word of Exhortation and Caution; and as you profess yourselves Children of the Day, don't forfeit your Advantages by Walking in Darkness, Rioting, Revelling, Chambering, and Wantonness: But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, that is, conform to his Example of Humility, Meekness and Temperance, &c. and endeavour by his Aid, to become Partakers of his divine Nature: And if you are yet Strangers to the Doctrine of the Cross of Christ, begin now to follow his Example in the first Step to *Christianity*, viz. *Self-Denial*, which can only entitle you to the Name of a *Christian*, or Disciple of Christ, taking up a daily Cross to your own Wills and inordinate Desires; for you must of Necessity know the Saviour of Mankind to mortify your unruly Passions, to regulate your Affections, to give them their proper Direction, and attract them to their true Centre, God, before you can properly rejoice in Christ: You must be enabled to say in Truth and Sincerity, my Soul doth magnify the Lord for his condescending Love and Mercy, in putting me in a Capacity of Salvation, and my Spirit rejoices in God my Saviour; for I now know of a Truth, that the Son of God is come, not because the holy Writings inform me of his outward and inward Revelation, but because he hath set up his Dominion in my Soul, and hath subdued mine Enemies, and given me Victory over the Lusts, Vanities, and sinful Pleasures of the World, and over such or such a Sin and Weakness. And further, when we can make this solemn Appeal,

Appeal, *Thou knowest, O Lord! that I love thee above all temporal Enjoyments, which I make subservient to thy Glory*; for he that loves any Thing more than Christ, is not worthy of him: When you come to this Experience, and not 'till then can you truly and fully rejoice in Christ; for those who live in Pleasure and Sin, are dead to divine Enjoyments, and cannot praise God, because Praise is an Act of the Mind that is sensible of God's Mercies, and can truly bless him for his Benefits: This is the Matter in which you should rejoice, that you know Christ savingly.

But now let us enquire, how the Generality of those called *Christians* do rejoice on the above-mentioned Occasion. And now shall I speak what I know experimentally, and say what Fruits I had in those Things, whereof I am now ashamed: Having been in Time past in the Observation of Times and Seasons, and high in the formal Profession of *Christianity*, without knowing the Power thereof to influence my Life and Practice, as will appear when I say, I ran to the same Excess and Riot at these Times with my Fellow Professors, after having been punctual in attending Places of Worship: The spare Time from this Service is generally spent in Feasting, Card-playing, Dancing, Revelling, Wantonness, Eating and Drinking, and rising up to play, foolish Jesting, which an inspired Apostle tells us, *are not convenient*. And among the vulgar Part of Mankind, what appears but Drunkenness, Oaths, Profaneness, Debaucheries of all Kinds, which by the Way, some are humbly of Opinion, 'tis the Business of the Magistrate to suppress or punish, who should rule and judge for God and his Glory. But to such a Pitch of Immorality are Men arrived (which is lamentable to behold!) that one might imagine they took the Advantage, and depended upon the Privilege and Benefit of the Coming of a Saviour, and sinned without Restraint, and more extravagantly, that his Grace might abound. But rather let Charity excite me to attribute all the Madness, extravagant Behaviour, and Sins committed at these Seasons, to  
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proceed from Inconsideration; Men the lower Class at least, seldom enquire into the Nature and Reason of Things, that they might judge of their Fitness or Lawfulness, but blindly follow the Example of Superiors, Custom and Tradition, whenever they appear in the Favour and Gratification of the sensual Mind and Appetites.

But I will now appeal to every one's Reason.— Judge you, whether your Method of rejoicing at these Seasons are agreeable to the *Christian* System, Faith, Doctrine, and Practice, in which you will find not one single Example to bear you out in your Luxury, Mirth and Jollity: You will allow, I doubt not, that the *Christian* Life is a continual Warfare, and in such a Situation, a State of Vigilance is absolutely necessary. We find in outward War, when an Invasion is expected, Men are placed properly to watch the Approach of the Enemy: and when they quit their Stations, and are off their Guard, then is the Enemy's Advantage, who seldom fails to make an Inroad: And thus it is in a spiritual Sense, where we are continually exposed to Temptations on every Side; if we are off our Watch, we shall certainly suffer Loss. Consider next the Nature of the Grace of God which comes thro' Jesus Christ, it teaches and assists Men, first to abstain from all Evil, and next, to walk soberly, godly and righteously in this present evil World, and to be holy in all Conversation; we are to keep within the Bounds of Sobriety, Temperance, &c. at all Times, and that the Principles of Virtue and Holiness must by us be reduced to Practice, to a constant Habit of Righteousness in the Soul, and then the Fruits of Holiness will appear in all our Conversation: In a Word, we must love God above all Things, and then shall we fear to offend him, either in Thought, Word or Act.

I have exceeded the Bounds of what I had chiefly in my View, but my Heart is greatly enlarged to all People, without Regard to Names, or different Denominations, in religious Opinions; a Principle of Charity, or Love to God and my Neighbour, having  
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prevailed upon me humbly to offer a few Things to your Consideration by Way of Caution; being fully convinced in my Judgment of the Doctrine; of the Apostle *Peter*, that *God is no Respector of Persons*, his Offers of Grace are universal, and all who comply with his Terms of Acceptance, he will in no wise reject; and I believe at the great Day, when Christ shall come in Glory and awful Majesty, to judge both Quick and Dead, there will be but the Distinction of *Just* and *Unjust*, under the Appellation of *Sheep* and *Goats*: Our present Business is impartially to examine, which of the Titles we may reasonably expect to be known by, at that tremendous Season? And by the Way, let us take this Rule to judge ourselves by; if we are the Sheep of Christ's Fold or Flock, Members of his Church, we shall hear his Voice, which is here emphatically taken for obeying of it.

But further, as one having obtain'd Mercy of God, by the Light of Christ, to see thro' Forms, Observations and human Traditions, into the Substance, Christ Jesus (whose Coming and Office was to convince the World of formal Righteousness, erroneous Judgments, and sinful Practices, and to remove and rectify them) I beseech you to listen to his Voice, which you will find inwardly summoning you to bring your Deeds to the Light, to the Judgment of Christ, that it may appear, whether they are wrought in God; for thus it was with me, when going about to establish and trust in my false Righteousness, and formal Profession of *Christianity*; God was pleased to visit and call me to Judgment, and condemned, among other Things, my formal Religion, as well as the Pride, Poms, and Vanities of the World, which I had lived in, contrary to my baptismal Vow; and all the Pleasure and Delight I took in Attendance on Balls, Assemblies, Masquerades, Operas, Musick-gardens, and vain Recreations of all Kinds, was judged and condemned as unlawful for *Christians* to amuse with and spend their precious Time in; for we, who profess Faith in

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Christ, ought to walk circumspectly, not as Fools, squandering and wasting their valuable Moments, allotted us to prepare for Heaven; but as Wise, redeeming the Time which we have heretofore spent in Sin and Vanity, by doubling our Diligence, in order to make our Calling and Election sure; that we may not be at an Uncertainty, but have a reasonable Foundation to hope, when the Messenger of Mortality may be sent to summons us hence, that we shall be translated out of Time into an happy Immortality.

But further, did the Almighty condemn, and call for a Sacrifice of all my worldly Pleasure, vain Recreations, and Diversions, &c. and leave me a forlorn Condition, destitute of Comfort and Happiness? No surely; he only removed them, because they stood as a Partition Wall between my View and his Glory, and discovered to me, that they were not my Happiness, but Lets in my Way of Bliss, which consisted in finding all my Complacency in him alone, from whom all solid Joy and Happiness must proceed. Having therefore tasted of divine Enjoyments, and witnessed them to be so superior to earthly Delights, that they will admit of no Comparison, I long that my Neighbours and Fellow-Citizens may partake of the rational Pleasure and divine Delight they afford, and ardently wish that they be may so wise, to substitute them in the Room of sensual Gratifications. And let us ever bear in Mind our high Calling, which is to Virtue and Glory; and as we are found in the Practice of the first, we shall obtain the last, for we shall be made Heirs of God, and joint Heirs with Christ, in his Kingdom of Peace and eternal Joy. Therefore let not the sordid Delights, and vain Amusements of this transitory Life deprive you of such an exceeding Benefit and Privilege, but be advised, I beseech you, seasonably to retire into yourselves, and enquire what Sins do most easily beset you, and then come to the Saviour of Mankind, implore his Aid, and if you are

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truly weary of your Burthen of Sin and Vanity, he will remove them and give you Rest.

Before I conclude, I would leave one Caution more with you, and that is, if at any Time you are awakened by the immediate Hand of the Almighty, or by any instrumental Means, to a Consideration of the State of your immortal Souls, I beseech thee, whoever thou art, don't rush into Company and Diversions, and dismiss the Conviction, but follow and improve it to thy spiritual Advantage: And may every Individual of you be so happy, as to be careful to add to the Faith you profess in Christ, Virtue, Temperance, saving Knowledge, brotherly Kindness and Charity, that you may so run as to obtain the End of that Faith, the Salvation of your Souls. *Amen.*

*P. S.* The Scripture tells us, *That what was written afore-time, was written for our Learning.* Let us learn then, that the Favour and Visitation of God to the People of the *Jews*, and his long and gracious Forbearance, was to excite their Love and Gratitude, and so lead them to Repentance: And let their Chastisement teach us not to dally with divine Mercy, which is still lengthened to this Nation. We have indeed felt the Rod of God's Displeasure, but not according to our Iniquities; neither do his Warnings seem to take Place in the Minds of the People. However I find a Call is extended yet to you, to forsake your Iniquities; that every Man put away his Idols from his Heart, lest as God did to *Jerusalem* and her Idols, he may do to *England* and those in it, who worship the Creatures, more than the Creator of all Things.

Consult your Testaments, and examine how the Birth of Christ was celebrated by an innumerable Company of the heavenly Host, and see if you can now join the holy Solemnity of the Church of the First born, in giving Glory to God in the Highest, with Peace on Earth, and good Will to Men, from a Bottom of Experience, that Christ the Saviour of Men has redeemed you to God, by taking away your Sins, and in-



spired your Hearts, first to give him Praise, and next, with true Charity to all Mankind; and observe how *Simeon* rejoiced at the Birth of Christ; how the Prophets *Anna* acted on this Occasion; and lastly, observe with what Humility, Reverence, and awful Worship, even the wise *Gentiles* approach'd the new born King and Saviour of Mankind.

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*And Jehosaphat went out again thro' the People, and brought them back to the Lord God of their Fathers; and he set Judges in the Land throughout all the fenced Cities;—and he said to the Judges, take Heed what ye do, let the Fear of the Lord be upon you.—Ye shall even warn them that they trespass not against the Lord, and so Wrath come upon you and your Brethren,—this do, and ye shall not trespass. 2 Chronicles Ch. xix. Part of 4, 5, 7, 9, and 10th Verses.*

**I**T is but a few Years since I was moved (as I apprehend under a Sense of Duty to God, and in Love to my Neighbour) to offer the foregoing *Cautions* to the Consideration of the Professors of *Christianity* in a general Way; and now feeling the like Concern to revive in my Spirit in great good Will to Men, that they may be made Partakers of Divine Peace and Salvation, and that the most High and omnipotent God may reign and be glorified in the Hearts of the People; and believing that I am directed by the same divine Hand, I resume my Pen, to add to the foregoing *Remarks* a few Hints, which are now more particularly address'd to *MAGISTRATES*; and such as stand in the Relation of *PARENTS, MASTERS, and MISTRESSES* of Families.

And first to *MAGISTRATES*, who doubtless will allow the following *Position*, That as created Beings, we are, and must be, dependent on God the Creator and supream Being, whom we are under a religious  
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Obligation to fear, love, honour, and worship; and as reasonable, social and benevolent Creatures, there is a reciprocal Service and joint Assistance necessary, among Men, without which Societies or Bodies of People could not subsist: And from this two-fold Duty to God and Man, no Dignity, Station or Degree among Men is exempt: Those of high and low Degree, the Poor and the Rich, the Bond and the Free, are bound alike to serve God, and are not only put into a Capacity of serving him, but in some Form or other of being useful to their Neighbour, some Times in a religious Sense: And I believe all Men, who rightly know themselves, will acknowledge, that as human Creatures, meer Men, abstract from divine Knowledge, and the Faculty of Reason unenlighten'd and unassisted by a divine Power, and superior Light, they are ignorant and weak, and unable to discharge their Duties, to move properly, justly and faithfully in both these Relations. Of this Truth it appears King Solomon was amply convinced long before the following Doctrines were deliver'd by the Apostle James, that *In God are hid all the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge; and that every good and perfect Gift cometh from God, the Father of Lights; and therefore, says he, if any Man lack Wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth liberally, and it shall be given him, provided he ask in Faith and without wavering: I say it is evident, that Solomon was sensible of these Truths, for we find him in the sacred History, addressing the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, the God only wise, in this solemn Manner, O Lord, my God! thou hast made me King, instead of David my Father; and I am but a little Child, I know not how to go out, or how to come in; and thy Servant is in the Midst of thy People, which thou hast chosen, a great People that cannot be number'd, nor counted for Multitude. Give therefore thy Servant an understanding Heart, that I may discern between good and bad; for who is able to judge this thy so great People?* And this Prayer we find pleased the Lord,

Lord, that *Solomon* had asked this Thing, and not long Life, nor Riches, nor the Life of his Enemies, but for himself Understanding to discern true Judgment, 1 *Kings* iii. And agreeably we find the Lord speaking in the Character of Wisdom, and says, *Counsel is mine and sound Wisdom; I am Understanding; I have Strength. By me Kings reign, and Princes decree Righteousness; by me Princes rule, and Nobles, even all the Judges of the Earth; I love them that love me, and those that seek me early shall find me; I lead in the Way of Righteousness, and in the Midst of the Path of Judgment.* And if this Wisdom from above is so absolutely necessary to direct and conduct Magistrates of the first Rank, certainly it is not less needful to their Inferiors. And if under the legal Administration, Men saw that they could not act without God to any good Purpose, though the Ordinances chiefly related to Externals; yet if the Devotion of the Heart was wanting, we find their outward Oblations were vain, surely the bringing in of a better Hope, by *Christ Jesus*, and a more perfect Law, will not make divine Assistance the less necessary, especially when at the Time he was veil'd with Flesh, and appear'd in the World to teach, example and suffer for Mankind, he positively asserts, that *Without me ye can do nothing*: Wherefore I am led, in the Fear of the Lord, and in great Humility, to exhort *Magistrates* and all in Authority, to examine your own Hearts, and see if you have been applying for this divine Understanding, Aid, and Assistance, to enable you in your several Duties, Stations, and Offices, to act for the Honor of God: \* And though I believe there are Men among you fearing God, and seeking the Welfare of your Neighbours, yet permit me to say, I am jealous that too many are deficient in this great Duty of seeking properly to God for Counsel,

\* The Power and Authority invested in you by your Station, are Talents you are intrusted with, and at the solemn Day of Inquisition, a strict Account thereof will be required by the Judge of Quick and Dead.



fel, and waiting for Direction in their important Charges and Undertakings: For it appears to me, that if Men in Authority applied earnestly for divine Direction, and acted agreeably thereunto, it would appear more evidently, that they judged and ruled for the Lord, and not for Man. I say, were it thus, I believe it would become the Engagements of some of the Magistrates now, as it was the Concern of <sup>b</sup> one of the *highest Dignity* formerly; and they would be going (as he did through the People, as it were from *Beer-sheba* to Mount *Ephraim*, to bring them back to the Lord God of their Fathers, and to the Obedience of the just and wholesome Laws of the Land: The Sword then would not be borne in vain; but Power and Authority would be turn'd against evil Doers, and there would be a Suppression, at least a Stop put in some Degree to that Torrent of Prophanity and Wickedness which now runs down our Streets as a mighty Stream, carrying along with it the Souls of Men to Perdition: And though nothing human, or short of a divine Power, can restrain the evil Inclination, and change the vile Affections of Men, yet it is evident, by the Laws which are provided, (but which are daily violated, shall I say with Impunity) that many wicked Practices, publick and flagrant Vices, which pass uncorrected, might in a great Measure be prevented, were the Laws of the Land duly executed against such Offenders.

And allow me to say, did you who are in Authority judge and rule for God's Glory, you would not only endeavour to restrain the publick, horrid and blasphemous Oaths and Curses, the Wrath of Man stirred up and inflamed by intemperate Drinking, but you would reduce the Number of Drinking-houses, (which you have been lately informed <sup>c</sup> are so numerous,

<sup>b</sup> King Jehosaphat 2 Chron. xix. 6. 7.

<sup>c</sup> Britain's Remembrancer.

rous, that in one Parish alone they mounted to 1500) and Places where the People spend their precious Moments, not only in drinking to Excess, but in Gaming, and other unchristian Pastimes; you would also dislodge those Nests of Thieves and Robbers that infest our Borders, invade our Property, and endanger our Lives; and you would break up those Cages of Uncleaness, the Receptacles of Harlots, Whoremongers and Adulterers, which to the unspeakable Grief of some tender Parents, so evidently corrupt the unthinking unhappy Youth of this Nation, tending to the Destruction of Soul and Body, and tempting them to lay Hands oftentimes on the Property of others to maintain and support their sinful and shameful Practices. But is this Soul-defiling Practice confined to our unhappy young Men? Are they the only simple ones that are caught in the Snare of the subtle Woman, and thereby led down to the Chambers of Death? No, with Sorrow let me say it, I have too much Reason to fear, that Men more advanced in Days, and under Marriage Vows and Engagements, who are boasting of their Reason, but nevertheless are debasing themselves below the brute Creation, and by this abominable Practice are divesting themselves of natural Affection, dissolving the Ties of Humanity, perhaps reducing a virtuous Wife and tender Children to Want and Misery, themselves to Contempt, and without timely Repentance, their poor Souls to a State of eternal Pain and Wretchedness.

But farther, did you rule in the Fear of God, and for his Honour, you would not only endeavour to prevent the lower Class of Men from rushing to Destruction, but you would go a Step farther, and put it out of the Power of those of higher Degree and Rank, publickly to dishonour God, and waste their

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precious Time, allotted by him for a more rational and noble Purpose; and this you would do in suppressing those Places or Scenes of Wickedness and Corruption, the *Assemblies* (or Midnight Revels) *Masquerades* and *Play-Houses*; and let me add, *Play-Books*, and those deistical Performances which ought not to shew their Heads in a Land professing *Christianity*, but which nevertheless are boldly and daringly exposed to Sale in too many Shops. And I have thought, that did this *British* Isle retain her primitive Modesty, those *unchaste Representations* in Printfellers Shops would not be suffer'd to meet and offend the modest Eye, no more than the Retailers of obscene and wanton Ballads be permitted to wound the chaste Ear: But the Mischief arising from such a Liberty does not end here; for every common Observer may see how soon these Snares of Satan find Entertainment in People of corrupt Minds; and my Soul has not only mourn'd for such, but I have been deeply affected with Grief, when I have heard these wicked, wanton Compositions eccho'd through the Streets by poor unhappy Children, corrupted and made wretched by wicked Parents, and other Agents for Satan; and 'tis no Marvel to find these wicked Instructions in Time of Childhood, reduced to as bad a Practice in Time of Youth, would to God I could say the farther advanced and aged, did not feel the baneful Influence of a bad Education.

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<sup>a</sup> See *William Law's* Unlawfulness of the Stage.—Bishop *Tillotson's* Sermons on Education, wherein he calls the Play-House the Devil's Chapel.—Bishop *Burnet* says, Plays, &c. ought not to be tolerated in a Country professing Christianity.—In *Horneck's* Delight and Judgment, he condemns the Stage, &c.—*Collier's* Enquiry, wherein he proves the Stage unlawful. *Bedford*, Vicar of Temple, Bristol, exposes the Wickedness and Immorality of the Stage; and adds the Presentments of the Magistrates of Bristol, 1706.—See Stage condemned 1700, address'd to Parliament; with Testimonies of Stage Poets against Plays.—See Collection of Testimonies of Primitive Christians, by Prince of *Conti*, translated from the French.—See a Tract, Stage-Plays inconsistent with Christianity.—See a late Tract, by a Gentleman of Oxford, Stage, Balls, &c. condemned.



You will not wonder at my Zeal against these Things when I say by sorrowful Experience, that the frequenting *Assemblies, Concerts, and Play-houses*, and reading *Plays*, and other corrupting, as well as many unedifying Books, were hastening the Destruction of my Soul; and had not omnipotent Power and infinite Goodness and Mercy appeared and interposed for my Deliverance, I had fallen a Prey to the common Adversary and Envier of our Souls Happiness. And as the Lord has graciously wrought my Deliverance from the Things that held me in Bondage, and deprived me of the Enjoyment of his Love and Favour, so I will venture to say, he would do for all who are willing to come under his reforming Hand.

And here let me tell you, as I think it required of me so to do, That when a general Reformation takes Place, it must be begun in the Hearts of Men in Power and high Stations; and therefore the Lord requires such to be Men fearing God, and hating Covetousness, walking righteously, and speaking uprightly; and that they despise the Gain of Oppression, shake their Hands from holding of Bribes, stop their Ears from hearing of Blood, and shut their Eyes from seeing of Evil, and that they respect not Persons in Judgment; in a Word, the Lord requires this of you, that you suffer his Kingdom to come, and his Will to be done in your own Particulars, which you often pray for in Words, but unless you really witness *Christ* to lead and govern you, you are not properly qualified to direct and govern Men agreeable to his Will, nor for his Glory; neither can you exert your Power with a becoming Authority, unless you are religiously concerned to enforce the Laws of the Land by a corresponding Example: And unless you are thus qualified to judge and act for God, you in this Sense bear the Sword in vain: Therefore I exhort you in the Dread of the Lord, and in *Christian* Love, as you tender his Honour, and the Peace and Felicity of your own, as well as the Soul of your Neighbour, to apply your  
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Hearts to true Wisdom, by the Assistance of which begin and proceed in this great Work in your own Hearts; and whilst you thus do, neglect not, I beseech you, the necessary Application for the Benefit of your \* Neighbours, who are now every Man doing what seems right in his own Eyes, and dwelling (as did a † City of old) in *Carelessness, Wickedness, and Security, because there was no Magistrate in the Land that might put them to shame in any Thing.*

And here, would the Design of this Paper admit, I might advance many Reasons to prove such a Conduct as I have mention'd, conducive both in a religious, civil or political Respect, to the Benefit of this Nation. However I hope no reasonable Person will take any Offence at this Plainness of Speech to my Superiors, especially when he considers *Solomon's* Observation, where he says, *Rebuke (or counsel) a wise Man, and he will love thee; but admonish a Fool, and he will hate thee:* Neither will the Unprejudic'd reject *Christian* Advice, though it drop from a Female Pen; for let me remark, that among the above mentioned Books, there wanted not several Female Performances which tended to corrupt my Mind; therefore you'll allow me this small Attempt to speak forth the Praise and Glory of that gracious Hand that deliver'd me from the Lusts and Corruptions of this evil World; and I believe the disinterested Aim of serving my Neighbour, by endeavouring to persuade him to abandon the prevailing Corruptions, and Soul-defiling Amusements of the Age, will not be censur'd by the truly *Christian* Mind, who may remember the Woman that broke the small Box of Ointment for her Lord's Use, was approved of him, as she had done what she could for his Honour; and though she was censur'd for it, it was by one who was not the best of his Followers.

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\* Thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy Brother, and not suffer Sin upon him,—lest thou bear his Burden.

† Judges xvii. 7.

And now let me say, that tho' my Concern for the Glory of God, and Good of my Species, is not limited to the Irregularities, Inconsistencies, Excess and Wickedness, practised in the Times you call *Holy-days*, but extends to all Times and Occasions that minister to Intemperance, Pride, and Vanity; yet expecting in the approaching Season, People will, as usual, be practising the Evils I have noted, and will be working Wickedness with Greediness, under a Pretence of rejoicing at the Birth of him who was separate from Sin and Sinners; and the very End of whose Coming was to destroy all these Works of the Devil, and instead of Sin, which is a Reproach to any People, to bring in his own everlasting Righteousness, which only can exalt a Nation; I cannot but more particularly call upon MAGISTRATES, PARENTS, and MASTERS, and all in Authority, that they would exert it to the utmost, in discouraging these shameful Practices: And now I think it may not be improper for such as say they are reformed from the Errors of *Papery*, to consider and enquire, if you are not contributing to the Wickedness committed in the Times you term *Festivals*, by giving Money to Servants and others at these Seasons, and thereby enabling them to rush into Excesses, that often tend to the Destruction of Body and Soul, and the undoing of many useful Servants? For I am inform'd, that the corrupt and antichristian Church of *Rome* (from whence you derive your *Saints-days*, your *Christmas* and other *Masses*, to the Shame of *Protestants*) give Money to Servants and others, at these Times, to purchase Pardons and Indulgences, then hawked about the Streets for the Liberty of sinning, and running headlong into all Manner of Wickedness; and hence came the Practice of giving what they call *Box-money* in this Nation.

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“ § EDGAR, a Saxon King, having some Sense of the Abomination of the Time, put forth a Canon, *That on Festival-Days every one should abstain from prophane Heathen Songs, and from diabolical Games and Pastimes, &c.* but now (says the Author of this Remark) the Canon is not heeded.”



And though People may object, *that this is not the Case now, and they bestow their Gifts with no evil Intention*; yet the Leisure and Opportunity afforded, and the Money distributed to Servants, Prentices, and Journeymen, no one can deny but that it helps on the general Excess and Wickedness of these Times; and were People to lay aside all religious Considerations, and only view these Evils in a political Light, they would see the great Disadvantages arising from the Observation of *Days and Times*, which I have not Time now to lay before you: And here I would just remark, that by thus speaking, I have not any Intention to persuade People to abridge their Servants, Prentices, &c. of any Advantage of Time or Money; I only think, if People allowed their Servants, &c. more suitable Opportunities of seeing their Friends, and spending their Money, it would be of far greater Advantage to them, than leaving them at Liberty to run with the Multitude to do evil at these Times, wherein I had almost said, the infernal Spirit seems to be more at loose among the People.

And now what remains with me is, to beseech you, Brethren, to let the Fear and Dread of God (who is greatly dishonoured in this Land by these Practices) have Place in your Hearts, whereby you may be constrained to see the Laws more punctually executed than they appear to be at present; for let me say, the Lord beholds your Actions, (as well as the Peoples Practices) and will most certainly judge them, whether they be good or evil; and will call you to render an Account of your Stewardships, and how you have discharged your great and high Trusts; whether you have judged and ruled for God or Man?

And now I shall close this Address partly with the Words of the forenamed King, *Take heed, Brethren, what you do, for you (are required to) judge not for Man, but for the Lord*; of whom, if you ask Wisdom, he will be with you in Judgment; wherefore I say again, let the Fear of the Lord be upon you, take heed and do it, for there is no Iniquity with the Lord

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our God, nor Respect of Persons, nor taking of Gifts; receive his Instructions then, and not Silver; and divine Knowledge rather than choice Gold; *for blessed is the Man, saith Wisdom, that beareth me, watching daily at my Gates, and waiting at the Posts of my Doors*: May this heavenly Wisdom direct you to such Methods and Expedients as will be most conducive to this great and important End, the Glory of God, and the temporal and eternal Benefit of the People, is my earnest Desire.

And here I thought I should have ended; but I find I am led a little farther, and it is to plead the Cause of the *Poor* and *Needy* that are cast out; and to say, with *Righteousness*, (Brethren) judge these poor, these miserable Objects that meet us at every Corner of the Streets; let not the Duty of the Office only excite you, but let Bowels of Mercy and Compassion move you to commiserate the Wretched, the Naked, the Hungry, and the Destitute: Can Humanity indulge in Luxury, whilst any poor Brother is perishing for lack of the Crumbs that fall from the full and delicate Table? Or dwell unconcerned in ceiled Houses, and stretch themselves on Beds of Ivory; with any Degree of Ease of Mind, whilst so many miserable Objects lie exposed in the open Streets to cold and inclement Seasons? Can the tender and compassionate Mind adorn the Body with costly and superfluous Apparel, whilst the Nakedness of the Poor is uncover'd? Consider these Things, Brethren, for *blessed is he that considereth the Poor, the Lord will deliver him in Time of Trouble*; a Day perhaps when it may please Providence (in whose Hand are both his Life and Possessions) to reduce him to the like Streights and Difficulties: Take the Poor therefore under your special Notice; feel for them, and sympathize with them, and bring them to the Houses provided for them, or be careful that they are convey'd to their respective Parishes, and be there justly dealt by; that we may not thus behold our own Flesh perishing in the Streets, and no Man regard it.

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And now I shall offer a few Things to the Consideration of PARENTS, MASTERS, and MISTRESSES, of Families, as these are acting in their Households in the Capacity of *Judges, Directors, and Rulers*; and to whom the Wisdom and divine Assistance that I have above recommended, is absolutely necessary, as you are requir'd in all their Respects (if you'd be truly happy) to judge for God; I mean for his Glory: Therefore I counsel such as are defective therein, earnestly to seek this heavenly Blessing; for I tell you of a Truth, that you can neither overcome your own evil Propensities (which I suppose you'll allow 'tis your Duty to do) nor judge for God in the Government of your Households, without this Wisdom, which not only dwells with Prudence, but leads into the Way of Righteousness and Paths of Peace: And this I assert from certain Knowledge and Experience; of which I find Freedom to give the following Account, and first say, that respecting divine Things, on which depended the temporal and eternal Happiness of myself and Family, I had indeed heard that God created Man for a Purpose of his own Glory, and the like essential Truths, but was altogether ignorant of them in Experience. I had a Form of the Knowledge of God and Christ Jesus, but I knew nothing of the Power of Godliness when first I was engaged to act in the abovesaid Relations; and until by the Hand of the Lord I was brought through the following Dispensations, I was unqualified to act for the Glory of God, or the real Benefit of myself and Family: But my Ignorance of heavenly Things proceeded from Inconsideration, and a Neglect of acquainting myself with God, and the Want of seeking his Peace, having lived without him in the World, and created to myself a false Peace, and a polluted Rest in the State of depraved Nature; not considering myself a sinful, weak and dependent Creature, (though I had often acknowledged this in a customary Way) nor that my Happiness depended on being restored to the Image and Favour of God; and therefore I neither asked for Wisdom, nor sought for Peace



Peace and Reconciliation with him, till he was pleased in Mercy first to seek me, and to stop me in my Career of Pleasure, Folly, and Vanity; and as it were to ask, as he did one of our first Parents, *Where art thou?* This Alarm of the Voice of the Lord led me to consider of my Ways, and to scrutinize into my own Heart, where I found I was indeed in the Transgression of his holy Laws, fulfilling the Lusts and Corruptions of a vain Mind, and though high in Profession of *Christianity*, yet erring and straying like a lost Sheep from the Fold of *Christ*, doing those Things which I ought not to have done, and consequently a miserable Sinner, as I had long confessed; but little Thought of coming out of this sinful State, till the Light of *Christ* shone in my Heart, and shew'd me to myself. This disagreeable View of the State of my Soul, I may say in Truth, caused a godly Sorrow in my Spirit, which wrought a Repentance, (I hope, by divine Assistance, never to be repented of) and the Judgment of God pass'd upon, and shook not only my Earth, but my Heavens also, and my formal Religion was made to vanish like a Scrawl, and my earthly Heart to tremble, when *Christ* our Righteousness appear'd therein, to bring me from the Form to the Power of Godliness, and to translate me from the Dominion of Satan to the Kingdom of God; whose Perfections I was led to consider, and I beheld him a God not only gracious, good and merciful, but pure, holy and just; and that he would not acquit the Guilty while he remains guilty, nor condemn the Innocent. And in this Day of great searching of Heart, I saw the Nature and Consequence of Sin, and that no unclean or polluted Soul could inherit the Kingdom of God; and therefore I was called to come out of this miserable Situation, I had so often in an insensible Manner complain'd of; but now I not only saw, but began to feel the Weight and Burden of Sin, and to be in earnest to be deliver'd from my Corruptions; and here I became a fit Subject of *Christ's* Invitation, *to take his Yoke*, for I wanted true Rest to my Soul, which none but he can give:  
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And now I saw that I had received a Gift of the Spirit, Grace or Light of *Christ*, a Measure or Degree of which is given to every Man to profit with in the Work of Salvation, *a Light that enlighteneth every Man coming into the World*, and a Power which I have found is sufficient and able to redeem from a State of Bondage or Corruption, as well as to teach and instruct in all Things pertaining to Life and Godliness; but I had neglected to occupy and profit with it, and so it lay buried in the Hurries and Tumults resulting from the Pursuit of the Profits, Grandeur, Pleasures and Friendship of this evil World, which by this divine Illumination I saw to be Enmity against God; and that *Christ* our Lord came to slay it all, and to destroy the Works of the Devil, the Poms and Vanities of this wicked World, and all the sinful Lusts of the Flesh, that Men might be reconciled to God: Moreover, I saw by this Light not only the Necessity of ceasing from all Manner of Sin, but an Obligation of discharging this great Duty required of all Men, *viz. To do justly, love Mercy, and walk humbly before the Lord*: And first of all to do Justice to God, by rendering to him his Due, the highest Degree of Love, Honour and Obedience; and next, to do Justice to my Neighbour, by loving him as myself; and here I could not wrong him in any Respect, but in this Love I was inclined to desire both his temporal and eternal Happiness, and to extend Benevolence, Sympathy, and Compassion, towards all Men. I saw also that I was requir'd to walk humbly before the Lord, in a Sense of my own Weakness, Insufficiency and Dependence upon the Almighty and all-seeing God, whose Protection and Assistance I was now sensible I stood always in need of, and that he noted all my Actions, and secretly rebuked all Pride and Exaltation of Mind, letting me see, that my Heart was not to be lifted up above my Brethren and Fellow-Creatures, but that I should be useful to them both in a social and religious Respect; for I saw that the Light I had receiv'd, was not only to be profitable to myself, but my Neighbour



also must have an Opportunity of Advantage by it, agreeable to the Precept of the Giver of this good Gift, who says: *Let your Light so shine before Men, that seeing your good Works, they may glorify your Father which is in Heaven*; and at the same Time he observes, *that Men don't use when they light a Candle, to put it under a Cover, but they set it on a Candlestick, and then it giveth Light to all that are in the House*: Thus our Light being seen it may in some Sense be said to lead others to *Christ*.

And in this Day of the inward Manifestation of the Son of God in my Soul, I not only saw that *Christians* were called to forsake Sin, and exhibit a good Example to the World, but that it is our Duty to rebuke our Neighbour, and not suffer Sin upon him without Reproof, that we bear not Sin for him: And as I walked in this Light I saw more Light, which discover'd that the Glory of God was concern'd in all my Thoughts Words, and Actions, and that whether I eat, drank, or cloathed, bought or sold, it was my Duty to keep a single Eye to his Honour; for I found that in every one of these Acts, he might be dishonour'd: I mean hereby, that in all Things I was forbid to act contrary to, or inconsistently with the Nature, Design, and Doctrines of *Christianity*; which divine Wisdom had led me to examine, and call'd me to follow our great Example of Holiness, Humility, and Self-denial, Jesus Christ my Lord, by whose Spirit I can in Truth call him *Lord*, as well as my *Saviour*; to whose Name and Almighty Power I ascribe the Glory of my Redemption from all Excess and Superfluity of Naughtiness, from an inordinate Thirst for Wealth, and from the Poms and Vanity of this wicked World, and from the destructive Pleasures, Pastimes, and Revelings, too many called *Christians* pursue on many Occasions and Opportunities.

But farther, I was directed to consider the Perfections of God, and the Nature and Tendency of Sin, as well as the Nature, Value, and Duration, of my Soul, and the Spirit of God helping my Infirmities, raised Cries and humble Petitions in my Spirit to the  
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God of the Spirits of all Flesh, that I might find a resting Place in the Day of Trouble, that solemn Season wherein I should be called to render an Account of the Deeds done in my mortal Part; and I saw that this holy Rest was prepar'd for the People of God, and not to be enter'd into, but upon Condition of living the Life of the Righteous; and that without an Evidence in my Soul of God's Spirit bearing Witness with my Spirit, that I had pleased him by loving him above all Things and keeping his Commandments, I could have no Foundation for Hope that I should obtain an Inheritance in his Kingdom, or dwell in his House for ever; which was now the one Thing that I earnestly desir'd, and fervently sought after, having seen the King, the Lord of Hosts, not only in the Dread of his Majesty reprov'ing, condemning and casting out my Transgressions, but in the Glory of his Holiness, and in the Perfection of his Beauty, which indeed eclipsed all the Glory, and stained all the Beauty of this fading World in my View; and caused me to choose the Lord for my Portion, and the God of *Jacob* for the Lot of mine Inheritance, and to desire that he might be the Portion of all People. And when I had seen the Necessity of making a suitable Preparation for the Felicity of my own Soul, an ardent Concern fell upon my Spirit, yea, strong Cries and Tears, with many Prayers, ascended the Throne of Grace on Behalf of the Souls of my dear Children, my Relations, and Friends, that they might be properly qualified and prepared to enter this holy Rest, and divine Enjoyment in the Mansions of eternal Bliss; yet my Desires were not confined to this narrow Compass, but my Heart having been enlarged by the universal Love of God, it was made an House of Prayer for all Men, from the King upon the Throne, to the meanest and most abject of his Subjects; yea, I desir'd that the Salvation of our God might extend to the Ends of the Earth, that all who had not attained thereunto might come to the Knowledge of the Truth, and be saved from all Sin, Error, and Vanity; from which

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I am persuaded the Lord is calling every one of you who may be involved therein, that such may forsake the Foolish and live, and go in the Way of (divine) Understanding, that you may hereby be capable of bringing up your Children in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord, and that you may give unto your Servants that which is just and equal, that which is their Due for Soul and Body; for remember, your Servants as well as your Children have a Claim to the Privileges of the new Covenant, and when circumcised in Heart and Ear, they are equally to partake with you of the Benefit of the one great Sacrifice offer'd for all Men: Therefore it is your Duty not only to instruct them at home, and leave them at Liberty to attend a Place of Worship, but you are not clear if you do not see that they thus do.

I exhort you then to be faithful in your own Particulars; walk before the Lord with a perfect Heart, serve him with a willing Mind, and love him, as it is your Duty, above all Things, and then you will keep his Commandments; then will you be wise Preceptors, *Christian* Examples, prudent Governors in your Houses, and be qualified to use a godly Authority, and not only instruct, advise and admonish, but in the Fear and Love of God, command and restrain your Children and Servants whilst under your Care, that you and your Households may be Partakers of the like precious Promises and Blessings with faithful *Abraham*, of whom the Lord gave the following Testimony, *I know him, that he will command his Children and his Household after him, and they shall keep the Ways of the Lord, to do Justice and Judgment, that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him*: For he had promised that he would bless him, and make him exceeding fruitful, and be a God unto him, and to his Seed after him. Let this Example and Reward of Piety and Faithfulness excite you to your Duty to God, yourselves, your Children and Servants; and remember how a Neglect of this Duty was punished in *Eli* and his House, because he  
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had not judged and ruled for God, but he honoured his Sons more than the Lord, *I have told him (saith the Lord) that I will judge his House for ever, for the Iniquity which he knoweth, because his Sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not; and therefore I have sworn unto the House of Eli, that the Iniquity of Eli's House, shall not be purged with Sacrifice nor Offerings for ever.* And that you may not incur the divine Displeasure, nor add to the Measure of the Cup of Iniquity, which seems in this Nation to be almost full, I call upon you, and intreat you in Gospel Love, for the Sake of your own Souls, as well as your Children, &c. to come out of your inconsistent Practices, your vain Pastimes and Recreations, your Revellings and Wantonness, your foolish Talking and vain Jestings, your Intemperance and evil Rejoicing; for most certain it is unchristian to practice and indulge in these Things at any Time, and much more so in the Seasons you pretend to consecrate to Piety and Godliness: Therefore do not blindly follow the vain Customs and Prescriptions of a godless Age, but search the Scriptures, and impartially examine, and compare your Practice with your *Christian* Profession, and you will soon see how contrary and inconsistent they are: Inform yourselves, and then you will be able to inform and instruct your Children and Households; but above all, come to the Law of the Lord written in the Heart, the new Covenant made with all Mankind (of which read *Hebrews* viii. 8.) that you may have Light to direct you, spiritual Life, Strength and Vigour to help you to discharge your Duty to God, and the great Trust reposed in you respecting your Children, your Servants, and your Apprentices, who are in a two-fold Sense committed to your Care; for you are not only to provide for their Bodies, but to instruct and example in Piety and Godliness: I say, you are, in a moral and religious Sense, Stewards, Overseers, Leaders and Instructors in your own Houses; and accordingly to the Appointment of Providence, as  
such



such you will one Day be called to give an Account to the supreme Lord and Lawgiver of the whole Earth, and it will not only be demanded of you, what you have done with his Corn, his Wine, Oil, Wool and Flax, and whether you have used them to his Glory; first to supply your own Necessities, and then for the Relief of your indigent Brethren; but how you have occupied the heavenly Gift of Grace, how you have exampled and instructed your Children, Servants and Apprentices, and whether you have watched over them for Good, and to the Glory of God?

And here by the Way, let me remind some of you, of the solemn Vows you have made to renounce the Devil and all his Works, the Pumps and Vanities of the wicked World; and at the same Time are not only indulging yourselves, but bringing up your Children in all the Luxury, Pomp, Grandeur, Pride and Vanity within your Reach: My Soul mourns when I behold the Situation of these; and I call upon you to consider of your Ways, and reform your Lives, that you may be a *Christian* Example to your Children and Neighbours, lest in some Sense you incur not only the Guilt of the present, but future Ages; for if People of this Age are not careful to reform, what will be the Consequence? will not those of the next Generation tread in their Steps? Therefore seek out the Law which is as lost in your Hearts, and observe the Statutes, and keep the Commandments of the Lord; then will you have Stones of Memorial to bring up to his Praise, and you will be qualified to instruct and rule your Children, agreeable to the inward Law wrote in your Hearts; that Law of the new Covenant, by which the Children of God are now in this Gospel-Day to walk, which confirms and explains the moral Law more perfectly. Walk, I say, by this Rule, and then you cannot hide it from your Children, but you will be shewing to the rising Generation, *the Praises of the Lord, and his Strength, and the wonderful Works that he hath done in your Souls; that the Generations to*

come

come may know them, even the Children which shall be born, who shall arise and declare them to their Children: And now mark for what End; That they might see their Hope in God, and not forget the Works of God, but keep his Commandments; who, saith my Soul, for the Multitude of his Mercies to the Children of Men, is worthy to be loved, feared and worshipped for ever!

And now I hope to be drawing to a Conclusion; and as I began with a *Caution to Christian Professors in general*, I shall add a few Observations and Admonitions which remain upon my Mind, and concern all such to weigh and consider: And here let me say (though it is with Sorrow) that I am sensible many of those who are acknowledging that they are Believers in *Christ* and are calling *Jesus*, Lord and Master, are nevertheless Bondslaves to Satan, who is presenting to their View the Glories and Grandeur of the World, and persuading them to pursue and embrace them as the best Things; and when they are beguiled by him, they are recommending and tempting their Children to embrace the same Things; and thus are People held in Bondage and Captivity to the Lust of the Eye, the Lust of the Flesh, and Pride of Life; the pursuit and Love of which the Apostle dissuades us from, because *they are not of the Father, but of the World*, (read *John ii. 15, 16*) and many, with myself, know by Experience, that they obstruct the Way to the Father; and though he sees you are declining his Laws, and erring and straying from his Ways, which lead to life, yet is his tender Compassion still extended to this Land, for he beholds your cruel Bondage, and sees the miserable Wages you will most certainly receive from your hard Taskmaster, if you resolve to continue Servants to Sin, and refuse to abandon your Lusts and Corruptions; I say, there is yet Mercy with the Lord that he may be feared and loved: And methinks I see this Land not yet forsaken, but as a City sought out by the gracious Hand of the Lord, who is still unwilling to give you up to the Will of your

your Enemy, and leave you to your own Delusion; and who, I will venture to say, is visiting you immediately by his Spirit, and sometimes is causing you to feel Remorse and Pain of Mind for your Misdeeds; and by sundry Ways and divers Manners is he calling to you, and offering Redemption from Sin, upon Condition of Repentance towards God, and Faith in the Power of *Jesus Christ*; not an historical Faith only, or a Belief that he died for your Sins, and rose again for your Justification; I say, you must not only thus believe in his Name, but you must be baptized, with his Baptism of Fire and the Holy Ghost, into his Nature; you must know him to purify and wash you from all Manner of Pollution, or you can have no Part in him; nor any Benefit of his Life (tho' you pretend to rejoice at his Birth) Death, nor Resurrection; neither can you in Truth call him *Lord*, but by the Holy Ghost thus operating in you.

And now beloved Fellow-Professors of the *Christian* Name, these few broken Hints of what I have in Degree experienced of the Dealings of the Lord in my own Particular, and what I have heard in the Ear, and seen with the Eye of my Understanding concerning others, I am made willing to publish as on the House-top, and in Gospel Love intreat you to come to a Consideration of your Ways, and to the Fear of the Lord, which is the Beginning of the Wisdom I have been recommending; and this will lead you to hate Pride and Arrogancy, and help you to depart from every evil Way; therefore I call upon you to sanctify the Lord in your Hearts; let him be your Dread and your Fear: Fear to live in Forgetfulness of God, who sees and marks your Ways, and will most certainly judge according to them; therefore fear to live in a careless, wanton and indolent Manner, O Professor of Christ, who art called to be sober, and to work out thy own Salvation with Fear and Trembling; who art call'd to Watchfulness and Prayer, and to be holy in all Mauner of Conversation, that thou  
mayst



mayst adorn the Doctrine of the Gospel of *Jesus Christ*; fear then to bury thy Talent of Grace in an outward Profession or Form of Godliness, being insensible of the Power which would purge thy Conscience from dead Works and Performances, and assist thee to worship God in Spirit and in Truth: Be afraid, I say, of a Will-worship and voluntary Humility, and bend not the Knee of thy Body without first feeling thy Soul bowed and prepared, by the humbling contriting Power of God influencing thee, under a real Sense of spiritual Want to sue to his Mercy for Relief, or in a Sense of his abounding Love and Goodness to praise his great Name: For God cannot be mocked, and we deceive ourselves, when we are drawing near with our Lips and our Hearts are far from him: Be afraid to continue to offend the Most High, by always confessing thyself a *miserable Sinner*, without heartily applying to God for Strength and Assistance to forsake Sin; for if thou continue thus a miserable Offender against *God's holy Laws*, and die in this wretched State, where *Christ* is gone thou canst never come; therefore defer not Repentance, lest thou be suddenly summon'd to give up thy Stewardship, and cited to appear at the Bar of Divine Justice before thou art prepared; and whether thy Account be in Order or Confusion, there will be no Demur to thy Sentence; no more Time to rectify thine Errors; no more Sacrifice for Sin. But farther, be afraid, O Professor, to prophane the sacred Name of God by Oaths or Curses, or by taking it in vain in thy light and common Conversation, and if thou art guilty, remember how often thou art reading thine own Condemnation, when thou art repeating the third Commandment: Be afraid of saying in an irreverent and light Manner, *thou hopest to be saved*; which Hope is without Foundation, unless thou art performing the unalterable Conditions of Salvation: Be afraid of an immoderate Desire for Wealth, an evil Covetousness, because it is Idolatry; and remember, the Covetous hath no more Place or Inheritance in the

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Kingdom of God, than the Drunkard or unclean Person. Again, be afraid of the Sin of Pride, that universal Passion which easily besets Men, and dwells in all unmortified Breasts; appearing in Malice, Envy, Hatred, Wrath, Strife, Emulation and Revenge; being implacable and unmerciful, &c. But it rests not here, for where this mischievous Passion is, there is every evil Work; there is an ambitious Desire of being above their Brethren; and therefore it is seeking Wealth, Honour and Preferment (and no Wonder such as these do not believe savingly in the Doctrines of *Christ*) and is shewing itself in the Gratification of the Lust of the Eyes, the Lust of the Flesh, the Poms and Vanities of this sinful World: Be afraid to exhibit an Example in any of these Things, because thou hast promised to renounce them all, and to keep God's holy Will and Commandments, being by him required not only to forsake Sin for thy own Sake, but to set a pious and godly Example for thy Neighbours, that others may follow thee as thou followest *Christ*: And once more let me say, be afraid to continue in a sinful State; for tho' a merciful Day of Visitation is still extended to this Nation, it is not a Mark that the Lord approves your Doings, but a Token of his Kindness; he spares you yet in meer Mercy, and his long Forbearance is design'd to lead you to Repentance; but remember, he will not always thus strive with you; look at his Dealings with Mankind in all Ages of the World, and you'll find he first visited them in Love; but where his Mercy fail'd to move the People to their Duty to him, his Judgments took Place: And have we not great Reason to be alarm'd for this sinful Nation, a People laden indeed with Iniquity; for we have seen his Displeasure waxes hot against the Unrighteousness and Ungodliness practised in this Land, and he has a Controversy not only against your gross Immoralities, but your Pride and Luxury, your Excess in Meats, Drinks, and Apparel, your vain Amusements and sinful Diversions,



tisements, your corrupt Conversation, foolish Talking, and idle Jestings; and without Repentance and Amendment, he will not only punish this Land, but the World for their Evil, and the Wicked for their Iniquity, and he will cause the Arrogancy of the Proud to cease, and lay low the Haughtiness of the Terrible; for he is about to make Men more precious and pure than fine Gold, and to cause the Isles (those People that bow to his Power in the Day of Mercy) to wait for his Law, which shall yet go forth out of Zion his holy Hill; and the Word (the Power) of the Lord, shall govern the Inhabitants of his new *Jerusalem*!

And here let me add one Caution more; say not in thine Heart, the *Vision is remote, and will tarry long*, and so continue to eat and to drink, to plant and to build, to buy and to sell, to marry, and indulge in your worldly Enjoyments, in a careless and secure State; and though the Judgments of God are not speedily executed, yet I beseech you, set not your Hearts to do evil; for remember, *it is appointed to Men once to die*, and you know not how soon you may be taken from all these Things which your Souls lust after; then whose shall they be? I'll tell you beloved; in this awful Day when you are laid upon a dying Bed, if you retain your Reason, and the Habit of Sinning hath not render'd you insensible thereof, and your Sins are set in order before your View, you will not matter whose these Things be, or who may enjoy your Wealth, &c. But Peace of Conscience, and Reconciliation with that God you have offended, and lived without his Government in the World, will be what you'll want; and what you'll find your earthly Treasure, your Bags of Gold, cannot purchase. I say, Sinner, if thou thus remain to a dying Hour, thou wilt be in great Terror; because <sup>h</sup> it is not only appointed unto Men to die, but after this, the Judgment of the righteous God, who will here render to every Man according to his Deeds: <sup>i</sup> *Tribulation and Anguish*

<sup>h</sup> Heb. ix. 27.

<sup>i</sup> Rom. ii. 9.



*Anguish upon every Soul of Man that doth Evil; but Glory, Honour and Peace to every Man that worketh Good.* 'Tis the Judgment of this awful Day, that I am constrain'd to put you in Mind to make a suitable Preparation for; temporal Judgments and outward Calamities, though dreadful to think of, only affect the Body; therefore fear not Famine, Pestilence, or the Sword of Men, which kill the Body, but are not able to kill the Soul, fear not any of these in Proportion to the Fear of him which is able <sup>\*</sup> *to destroy both Soul and Body in Hell*; for <sup>†</sup> *it is a fearful Thing to fall into the Hands of the living God* with your Sins unrepented of; therefore fear him, who is worthy thereof, as well as to be loved, honoured, worshipped and adored, not only for his Perfections, but for his good Will to Men, whom he calls to Virtue, that he may bring them to Glory!

And now my Friends and Fellow-Mortals, I beseech you, let these Cautions and Admonitions, the Result of an ardent Desire for the Good of your immortal Souls, be solidly considered by you; they will not hurt the best of you: And such of you as have set your Faces Zion-ward, perhaps may wonder that I have not dropped you a Word of Encouragement by the Way; to these I shall just say, I know it will be well with the Righteous, with them that hold on their Way, that love God above all Things, and always fear before him; but my present Business is to warn the Unrighteous, that they flee from the Wrath which will certainly be revealed, either here or hereafter, against all their ungodly Deeds: And may the God of all Grace, at whose Feet I lay down this small Labour of Love, give *these* Repentance unto Life, and a right Understanding in all Things pertaining to Life and Godliness, and if it be his Will, bless it in Degree to his Glory, and their eternal Benefit.



SOPHIA HUME,

<sup>\*</sup> Matt. x. 28.

<sup>†</sup> Heb. x. 31.